

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 EUR-12 OMB-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 SAB-01

ACDA-05 EB-07 AID-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /100 W

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R 191214Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4634

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION GENEVA

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MODIFICATIONS TO TEXT OF ASAD - DEBORCHGRAVE
INTERVIEW

REF: DAMASCUS 3589

1. THERE ARE SOME NOTEWORTHY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEXT OF
ASAD - DEBORCHGRAVE INTERVIEW AS APPROVED FOR RELEASE BY
CORRESPONDENT (DAMASCUS 3589) AND ARABIC VERSION RELEASED
(SEPT. 15) IN DAMASCUS PRESS (FBIS JN1520056). ASAD'S ANSWER TO
FIRST QUESTION POSED BY DEBORCHGRAVE CONTAINED FOLLOWING ADDITION
IN ARABIC TEXT: "WE ARE STRUGGLING FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A JUST
PEACE IN THE AREA. WE HAVE AN INTEREST IN THIS PEACE, AND
THE OTHER WORLD PEOPLES, INCLUDING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, HAVE
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AN INTEREST IN THIS JUST PEACE AS WELL. THE SINAI AGREEMENT HAS

COME TO WORK IN A DIRECTION OPPOSITE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A JUST PEACE. WE HAVE DEFINED OUR STAND TOWARD THIS AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS THAT IT DOES NOT SERVE THE PEACE WE ARE SEEKING."

2. SECOND MODIFICATION INVOLVED ADDITION TO DEBORCHGRAVE QUESTION, "WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE MINIMUM BASIS FOR ANOTHER GOLAN AGREEMENT?" ARABIC VERSION ADDED, "YOU SAID BEFORE THAT THE MINIMUM BASIS REQUIRED IN THE GOLAN IS EITHER WITHDRAWAL ALL ALONG THE LINE ON A DEPTH TO BE NEGOTIATED, OR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IS THIS STILL YOUR STAND?"

3. THIRD ALTERATION CONCERNED ASAD'S RESPONSE TO QUESTION OF PERMITTING FREEDOM OF PALESTINIAN FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS FROM GOLAN. ORIGINAL VERSION -- "IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO CONDUCT THEIR BATTLES FROM ANY PART OF THE ARAB HOMELAND, AND THAT INCLUDES SYRIA" -- APPEARED TO SIGNAL ABRUPT CHANGE IN DIRECTION OF LIFTING RESTRICTIONS ON PALESTINIAN USE OF SYRIAN TERRITORY AS TAKE-OFF POINT FOR ACTIONS AIMED AT ISRAEL. ARABIC VERSION ADDED TO ASAD'S ANSWER THE PHRASE, "WE HAVE NEVER SAID ANYTHING TO THE CONTRARY." THIS DEFTLY CORRECTED POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION THAT PRESIDENT HAD ACKNOWLEDGED TRIGGERING A MAJOR POLICY CHANGE.

4. COMMENT: ASAD APPEARS TO BE REMINDING HIS ARAB AUDIENCE, IN MIDST OF REPEATED SYRIAN ATTACKS AGAINST SINAI AGREEMENT, THAT SYRIA STILL ENGAGED IN SEEKING PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. SECOND MODIFICATION HARKING BACK TO FEB. 1975 DEBORCHGRAVE-ASAD INTERVIEW MAY HAVE BEEN INSERTED TO SUGGEST SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SECOND INTERIM SETTLEMENT IF PROPER CONDITION MET, I.E., ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ALL ALONG DISENGAGEMENT SPINE. WE ASSUME THAT ASAD CONVEYED THIS MESSAGE TO ARAB RATHER THAN WESTERN AUDIENCE, BECAUSE HE CONCERNED THAT ARAB PUBLIC NOT DRAW WRONG CONCLUSIONS FROM SYRIAN CRITICISM OF SINAI AGREEMENT.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PEACE OBSERVATION MISSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC03667
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750327-0533
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750932/aaaabcercer.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 DAMASCUS 3589
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <10 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN MODIFICATIONS TO TEXT OF ASAD - DEBORCHGRAVE INTERVIEW
TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS, (ASAD, HAFIZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006